

## Message Text

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ACTION EA-09

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 IO-13 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-01

INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02

SS-15 USIA-06 OMB-01 /069 W

-----003940 300639Z /20

R 300430Z JUN 77

FM AMEMBASSY PORT MORESBY

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 2387

USUN NEW YORK 113

INFO CINCPAC HONOLULU

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE PORT MORESBY 0834

CINCPAC FOR POLAD

EO 11652: N/A

TAGS: PGOV PINR PDIP PORG

SUBJ: PNG AMBASSADOR TO US CRITICIZES PNG DFAT

1. IN TWO LOCAL RADIO INTERVIEWS, THE CONTENT OF WHICH WAS REPORTED IN DETAIL IN LOCAL PRESS, PAULIUS MATANE, PNG AMBASSADOR TO US, UN AND HIGH COMMISSIONER TO CANADA, CRITICIZED PNG DEPT OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS AND TRADE FOR INCOMPETENCE, LACK OF PLANNING AND "A COULDN'T CARE LESS ATTITUDE" WHICH MATANE ASSERTED IS AFFECTING THE MORALE OF PNG DIPLOMATS ABROAD AND WASTING GOVERNMENT MONEY. HE CITED HIS INABILITY TO GET INSTRUCTIONS, GUIDELINES AND BACKGROUND INFORMATION ON DEVELOPMENTS IN PNG AS PARTICULAR SOURCES OF FRUSTRATION. HE CHARGED THAT FOREIGN MINISTER SIR MAORI KIKI HAD BEEN ADVISED NOT TO CONTACT MATANE DURING KIKI'S LAST VISIT TO THE UN. HE SAID THAT THE MOVING OF THE PNG MISSION FROM WASHINGTON TO NEW YORK WAS A MISTAKE AND "I FEEL IT'S A WASTE OF TIME IN NEW YORK, ATTENDING ENDLESS MEETINGS THAT COME UP, WITHOUT BENEFIT TO PNG." HE NOTED THAT THE US IS A RICH UNTAPPED SOURCE OF INVESTMENT, EXPERTISE AND TECHNOLOGY: "IF WE WANT TO GET THEM

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TO INVEST HERE, WE MUST WORK HARDER AT THIS."

2. IN A REBUTTAL BROADCAST, ALSO REPORTED IN PRESS, ACTING SECRETARY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS AND TRADE BEN SABUMEI SAID MATANE SHOULD RESIGN IF HE COULD NOT COMPREHEND HIS ROLE IN AN OVERSEAS POST AFTER TWO YEARS. SABUMEI CHARACTERIZED MATANE'S COMMENTS AS IRRESPONSIBLE AND TYPICAL OF POLITICAL APPOINTEES

WHO HAD NOT BEEN ENMESHED IN THE WORKINGS OF THE DEPT. HE SAID MATANE'S VIEWS ON THE UN WERE NARROW IN VIEW OF PNG'S ROLE AND OBLIGATIONS IN INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS AND COUNTERED MATANE'S ARGUMENT REGARDING US INVESTMENT BY POINTING OUT THAT US FINANCIAL CENTERS ARE IN NEW YORK. SABUMEI NEVERTHELESS FRANKLY ADMITTED THAT THERE HAD BEEN LACK OF CLEAR POLICY DIRECTION FROM PORT MORESBY, AND THAT THE DEPARTMENT HAD EXPERIENCED DIFFICULTIES IN GETTING ESTABLISHED.

3. IN A FOLLOW-UP EDITORIAL, THE POST-COURIER NOTED THAT MATANE'S CLAIMS WERE DETAILED, HARD HITTING AND IN MANY WAYS REFRESHING. THE EDITORIAL NOTED THAT SIMILAR CRITICISM HAD BEEN FORTHCOMING FROM FORMER PNG HIGH COMMISSIONER TO AUSTRALIA, OALA OALA-RARUA, WHO HAD INDICATED THAT HE HAD FELT TOTALLY ISOLATED DUE TO IRREGULAR AND CONFLICTING DISPATCHES FROM HOME.

4. COMMENT: DESPITE THE STRIDENCY OF THIS DIALOGUE THERE HAS BEEN NO REAL INDICATION THAT MATANE EITHER INTENDS TO RESIGN OR THAT DFAT PLANS TO SACK HIM. OUR OBSERVATIONS OVER THE PAST THREE YEARS LEAD US TO BELIEVE THAT THE HIGH TURNOVER OF PERSONNEL IN DFAT, PNG'S NEWNESS TO THE INTERNATIONAL SCENE AND A CERTAIN LEVEL OF GROPING IN REGARD TO THE ROLE IT WISHES TO PURSUE OVERSEAS HAS RESULTED IN AN AT TIMES EXTREMELY WEAK PERFORMANCE BY THE DEPARTMENT. DFAT IS BOTH UNDERSTAFFED AND INEXPERIENCED. PNG'S DIPLOMATIC PERSONNEL LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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ABROAD ARE NEW TO THE GAME AND DO NOT HAVE A SOLID IMAGE THEMSELVES OF WHAT THEIR ROLE SHOULD BE.

5. SABUMEI TELEPHONED AMBASSADOR FOLLOWING RADIO EXCHANGE TO SAY HE HOPED USG WOULD NOT BE PUT OFF BY THIS PUBLIC DISPUTE. HE SAID HE DID NOT ANTICIPATE IT WOULD AFFECT DECISION TO MOVE MATANE TO NEW YORK. AMBASSADOR ASKED IF RUMOR THAT MATANE WAS BEING CONSIDERED FOR VICE CHANCELLORSHIP OF UPNG WERE CORRECT, BUT SABUMEI KNEW NOTHING ABOUT IT. SABUMEI EXPECTS MATANE TO RETURN TO NEW YORK. OLMSTED

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## Message Attributes

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**Channel Indicators:** n/a  
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**Review Markings:**  
Margaret P. Grafeld  
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